

# BOOK REVIEWS



As we mentioned in our last issue, we have received a large number of publications for review during the past few months. We mentioned a few of them in that issue; here are more:

- **AMERICAN MILITARY POLICY IN SMALL WARS: THE CASE OF EL SALVADOR.** By A.J. Bacevich, James D. Hallums, Richard H. White, and Thomas F. Young. A Special Report of the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, Incorporated (Pergamon-Brassey's, 1988. 58 Pages. \$9.95, Softbound). This is a publication that all U.S. Infantrymen should read and study. It was prepared by four serving U.S. Army officers for the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, where they served during the 1987-1988 academic year as National Security Fellows.

In their report, the authors criticize U.S. military policy as it was developed for and practiced in El Salvador between 1979 and 1987, and hold little hope for any real improvement in the future. More, they believe that the U.S. military establishment does not know how to fight "small wars" and "that achieving success in small wars necessitates a drastic revision of American priorities at least as far as the theater of war is concerned."

They have talked with numerous members of the U.S. and Salvadoran military forces as well as U.S. Foreign Service officers and AID officials who had served in El Salvador. They also visited that country for a first-hand look in October 1987.

They offer us a lot of things to think about, and we hope their report will receive serious consideration by all who are concerned with armed interventions, small wars, and counterinsurgency operations.

- **ADVICE AND SUPPORT: THE FINAL YEARS, 1965-1973.** By Jeffrey J. Clarke. The Fourth Volume in the United States Army In Vietnam Series (Superintendent of Documents, 1988.

S/N 008-029-00158-6. 561 Pages. \$21.00, Softbound). Although there is a five-year gap between the events of this volume and those described by Ronald H. Spector in his 1983 book in the same series—**ADVICE AND SUPPORT: THE EARLY YEARS OF THE U.S. ARMY IN VIETNAM, 1941-1960**—little changed in the U.S. approach to the war in Vietnam. From the beginning of active U.S. participation in Vietnam in mid-1954 to the U.S. withdrawal 20 years later, U.S. leaders continually tried to remodel the South Vietnamese political structure and military services so that they would mirror those of the United States.

The effort was doomed to failure, for those leaders failed to heed the dictum that, as the author of this volume puts it, it is "beyond the capacity of one power to reform and reshape the society of another." Throughout the years, senior U.S. leaders refused to believe the disturbing reports of Vietnamese ineffectiveness that were passed up the chain of command by U.S. advisers in the field; they preferred to believe the questionable statistics given to them from other sources, and continued to press policies on their subordinates in the belief that what they were doing in Vietnam was the right thing and would eventually succeed.

Jeffrey Clarke, a historian with the Army's Center of Military History, has done a fine job in putting together this history from a variety of sources, including numerous interviews with former advisers at all levels. It is another book that should be read and studied by all U.S. infantrymen.

- **HAMBURGER HILL, MAY 11-20, 1969.** By Samuel Zaffiri (Presidio, 1988. 304 Pages. \$18.95). In many ways this is a difficult as well as disappointing book to read. It is more the highly personal account of a nine-day battle fought in the A Shau valley of South Vietnam by one U.S. infantry battalion—the 3d Battalion,

187th Infantry—in May 1969. More particularly, the main focus of the book seems to be on the words and actions of the battalion's commander, Lieutenant Colonel Weldon Honeycutt.

Because the author does use personal accounts of the action, the reader is subjected to a lot of blood and gore. Soldiers are not just wounded, they are blown apart; arms and legs litter the battle areas. Many things are left unsaid or lost in transition because the author loses control of his narrative about a third of the way into it and lets the reader flounder on the side of the mountain or in the notorious draw he keeps mentioning. At times, it seems there are more men coming down the mountain than there are going up. A platoon leader is described in vigorous terms as he stands near a tree firing a grenade launcher at the enemy just above him; we never hear of him again.

Every soldier whose name is mentioned in this book and who is still living will want a copy. But those readers who want to know exactly how U.S. infantry battalions fought their individual battles in Vietnam will find little to interest them.

- **AMERICANS AT WAR, 1975-1986: AN ERA OF VIOLENT PEACE.** By Daniel P. Bolger (Presidio, 1988. 466 Pages. \$24.95). For the United States, the Vietnam War ended on 30 April 1975. Between then and 15 April 1986, the U.S. conducted seven of what the author, a serving U.S. Army officer, refers to as "expeditionary actions"—the recovery of the SS *Mayaguez* and its crew; the raid into Iran; the Marine deployment into Lebanon; the Grenada campaign; operations against Libya; and the interception of the *Archille Lauro* hijackers. He does not believe the U.S. news media adequately covered those actions, not because of media bias but because of the lack of "an articulate understanding of how armed forces really



work." His book is intended to set the record straight.

Unfortunately, while the author is a trained historian, his writing—often overblown and filled with needless descriptions of sunsets and sunrises—betrays that training. In at least two of the actions—the Iran raid and Lebanon—he allows himself to be carried away with an all too apparent dislike for certain of the military commanders. In at least one other—Grenada—he is not critical enough.

The book does have some value if only because the author does offer accounts "fuller than most." It is too bad he could not back away from his material long enough to see the forest instead of the trees.

• **THE UNITED STATES INFANTRY: AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY, 1775-1918.** By Gregory J.W. Urwin. Color illustrations by Darby Erd (Sterling, 1988. 176 Pages. \$24.95). This is not really a history of the U.S. Infantry, although the color illustrations and photographs do depict the uniforms worn and the weapons and equipment used by the infantry during the years it covers. It is more a brief history of the United States Army from its beginnings during the colonial wars to the end of World War I. In that respect, it follows the general outline adopted by the late T. Harry Williams in his 1981 publication titled **THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN WARS FROM COLONIAL TIMES TO WORLD WAR I**, a book that is not listed in the author's bibliography.

As such, and considering the value of the illustrations and photographs to the narrative, this book can be classed as a useful reference tool for anyone interested in the Army's history.

• **U.S. ARMY CLOTH INSIGNIA, 1941 TO THE PRESENT: AN ILLUSTRATED REFERENCE GUIDE FOR COLLECTORS.** By Brian L. Davis (Sterling, 1987. 70 Pages. \$14.95). This book is exactly what the title says it is—an illustrated guide for collectors, complete with a pricing guide that was current at the time the book was prepared. It contains more than 700 black-and-white illustrations of shoulder sleeve insignia, pocket patches, and beret flashes. The author's introduction is most in-

teresting and informative, as is his list of other publications for further reading.

• **SOLDAT, THE WORLD WAR II GERMAN ARMY COMBAT UNIFORM COLLECTOR'S HANDBOOK: EQUIPPING THE GERMAN ARMY FOOT SOLDIER IN EUROPE, 1943,** by Cyrus A. Lee (Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, 713 South Third Street West, Missoula, Montana 59801. 1988. 88 Pages. \$7.95, Softbound). Here is another collector's item, the first in a planned three-volume series that will cover the period from 1939-1945. Each of the book's four major chapters is devoted to a special area—uniforms, equipment, weapons, and miscellaneous items such as signal equipment, documents needed by the individual soldier, and identification discs. The author also includes an index and a selected bibliography.

• **SMALL ARMS TODAY, 2d EDITION.** By Edward C. Ezell (Stackpole Books, 1988. 480 Pages. \$19.95, Softbound). This up-dated edition of a most useful reference book was put together by a well-known small arms expert who has authored numerous other weapon books and currently serves as the Supervisor of the Division of Armed Forces History of the Smithsonian Institution. The book lists the types of small arms in use today in every country of the world, traces the movement of small arms throughout the world, presents information on weapons used by guerrillas and terrorists, and contains more than 100 photographs and line drawings of particular weapons.

The weapon entries are located by countries listed alphabetically and are arranged by category—handguns, sub-machineguns, rifles, shotguns, machineguns and automatic cannon. Two types of identification numbers are used—NSN (NATO stock numbers) and FOM (Foreign Materiel Numbers). The last section discusses developments in small arms ammunition since 1939. The book also has an index and a selected bibliography.

Here are a number of other reviews: **JANE'S ARMoured FIGHTING VEHICLE SYSTEMS, 1988-89.** First Edition. Edited by Tony Cullen and Christopher F. Foss (Jane's, 1988. 480

Pages.)

Much of the information in this book, the first in a new series, formerly appeared in other volumes in the Jane yearbook group. Because of the growing importance of armored vehicles on the battlefield, and the fact that a growing number of countries are now developing their own vehicles, the publisher decided to group certain information about armored fighting vehicles so that it would be more easily accessible to the user. It contains a number of key sections such as AFV armament, AFV ammunition, vehicle protection, engines, transmissions and powerpacks, mobility, turrets and cupolas, and optics. The book also has an addenda and a detailed index.

This is an outstanding addition to the Jane's yearbook series.

**LIDDELL HART AND THE WEIGHT OF HISTORY,** by John J. Mearsheimer (Cornell University Press, 1988. 234 Pages. \$24.95). Reviewed by Captain Harold E. Raugh, Jr., United States Army.

Captain Sir Basil Liddell Hart is considered by many to be the foremost military theoretician and historian of the 20th century, and has been lauded as "The Captain Who Taught Generals." He prided himself on being the archfoe of appeasement, the brain behind the blitzkrieg, and the mentor of Guderian and Rommel.

The author of this book, a professor of political science at the University of Chicago who has previously published works on contemporary military strategy, recounts the evolution of Liddell Hart's military thought as shown in his writings. Through scrupulous research and a dissection of Liddell Hart's arguments, including an incisive analysis of his voluminous correspondence, Mearsheimer shows convincingly that Liddell Hart manipulated facts and distorted history to resurrect a reputation that had been tarnished by the events of World War II.

Early in his career, Liddell Hart believed that the followers of Clausewitz—"the Mahdi of mass and mutual massacre"—were responsible for the bloody stalemate that character-



World War I. He further thought of himself as "the source of wisdom who would counteract Clausewitz's bad ideas."

In the 1920s and 1930s, Liddell Hart did favor mechanization and the tank, though his interest vacillated. He wrote basically nothing about the "indirect approach" between 1933 and 1940, and little about the blitzkrieg. He was against the British "continental commitment," and after Hitler dismembered Czechoslovakia in March 1939 and British policy shifted away from appeasement, Liddell Hart "opposed this shift and argued forcefully for further appeasement."

France's fall in 1940 badly damaged Liddell Hart's reputation. After the war, he consciously used a number of methods, including "selfish manipulation of the historical records," in an attempt to regain his lost prestige. Mearsheimer's most damaging revelation may be the one that shows Liddell Hart used the German generals to his personal advantage. His 1948 book, *The German Generals Talk*, is but one example of how, the author says, Liddell Hart and the generals polished "up each other's soiled reputations for mutual benefit."

This impeccably documented, myth-shattering, and enthralling book cannot be recommended too highly, not only to soldiers and historians but also to those who want to learn how history has been manipulated in the past and how such manipulation might be prevented in the future.

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**NAPOLEON'S INVASION OF RUSSIA**, by George F. Nafziger (Presidio, 1988. 641 Pages. \$45.00). Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel John C. Spence III, United States Army Reserve.

As one reads accounts of Adolf Hitler's planning for and executing his Operation *Barbarossa*, there is a distinct sense of *deja vu*. On 21 June 1941, the German Army invaded the Soviet Union. On 23 June 1812, leading elements of Napoleon's *Grand Armee* reached the Niemen River, which separated the Grand Duchy of Warsaw and Russia. Cold, hunger, and inattention to sound logistical principles contributed to the

defeat of each army.

Historians and students of the Napoleonic period will appreciate this highly detailed account of one of the most disastrous campaigns ever conducted by French military forces. The retreat from Moscow must rank with such French humiliations as the capitulation in 1940 and the defeat at Dienbienphu in 1954.

Nafziger, a specialist in Napoleonic military strategy, provides the reader with an overview of the balance of forces in Europe in 1812, as well as a detailed analysis of France's own military forces and Allied resources. Of significant value is an almost complete order of battle of the French and Allied forces from 1810 to 1812, as well as one for the Tsarist forces. His research into obscure archival material has yielded a wealth of factual information, and his book can be profitably used as a casebook study of the Russian campaign.

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**MISSILE DEFENSES AND WESTERN EUROPEAN SECURITY: NATO STRATEGY, ARMS CONTROL, AND DETERRENCE**. By Robert M. Soofer. Contributions in Military Studies Number 81 (Greenwood Press, 1988. 174 Pages.) Reviewed by Captain Stephen A. Johnson, United States Army.

Since President Ronald Reagan's March 1983 announcement of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), Western Europe's concerns over the U.S. commitment to the defense of Europe have intensified. Robert Soofer, an instructor at Georgetown University and a national defense analyst for the U.S. Senate Republican Policy Committee, analyzes the arguments against SDI advanced by certain Western European countries to determine whether strategic and tactical missile defenses actually lessen or increase their security.

After providing a historical perspective by discussing European attitudes regarding missile defenses during the ABM controversy of the late 1960s and early 1970s, Soofer shows that the Western European perspective of deterrence is not based on conventional defense but on nuclear escalation. He then points out that the Western European view of SDI, as

it applies to their idea of deterrence, should have been expected.

The strength of this book lies in its explanation of the Western European views of SDI and the author's analysis that points out how SDI would improve the U.S. commitment to NATO and would not, as many Western Europeans fear, cause a "decoupling" of the U.S. from NATO.

It is recommended for any reader interested in international relations, strategic studies, or diplomacy.

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**TO RAISE AN ARMY: THE DRAFT COMES TO MODERN AMERICA**. By John Whiteclay Chambers II (Free Press, 1987. 386 Pages. \$24.95). Reviewed by Command Sergeant Major John W. Cooper, United States Army Reserve.

The author, an associate professor of history at Rutgers University, has actually written two books in one. His major focus is on the evolution, implementation, and effects of the selective service draft during World War I. He argues that President Woodrow Wilson's political fears of Theodore Roosevelt's being selected to head a division of volunteers led him to drop his objection to the draft. In short, Wilson was so concerned about losing the ability to direct the war that he was willing to set aside his preference for the traditional volunteer army of citizen soldiers in favor of conscription.

The author also discusses the struggle over classification and exemptions as well as the criticisms of the system from people who were concerned with discrimination against blacks, the exclusion of non-resident aliens, the drafting of the rich, and the lack of officers from the lower socio-economic classes.

This analysis is set within a larger context, as Professor Chambers includes a four-chapter essay on the various military formats that have been used in the history of our country. He concludes this second phase of the book by examining today's all-volunteer force and possible alternatives. Throughout, he argues that the type of military format used in a particular era reflects the political and social culture of the nation at the time as well as the attitudes of its political leaders



toward the role of the U.S. in world affairs.

This is a very readable, extensively documented study of conscription and our experience with it in World War I. It should interest students of that war and of the Progressive Era. More important, it should appeal to anyone concerned with the way the U.S. raises its military forces in both war and peace.

**AIR POWER AND THE GROUND WAR IN VIETNAM.** By Donald J. Mrozek (Air University Press, 1988. 196 Pages. \$9.00). Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Jack Mudie, United States Air Force Retired.

Dr. Donald Mrozek, a professor of history at Kansas State University, acknowledges in his introduction that his study is a limited one in that it centers on expectations instead of the actual effect of air power on the ground war in Vietnam. He mentions only in passing such important operations as Linebacker II, the so-called 1972 Christmas bombing campaign against Hanoi and Haiphong that received much credit for the "peace" agreement that North Vietnam finally signed after years of stalling and subterfuge.

As such, the book stays within the author's self-imposed boundaries in discussing innovations such as the use of sensors to detect southbound traffic on the Ho Chi Minh trail, the development of C-47 and C-130 gunships as close support aircraft, and the adaption of the B-52 bomber to missions against tactical targets.

Neither these nor other novel operations were without their inter- or even intra-service opponents, and Mrozek's underlying theme is that the war was a struggle of rigidity versus vacillation. With the apparent lack of clear-cut goals further exacerbated by inter-service rivalry and civilian overcontrol of routine military operations, Pogo's observation that "the enemy is us" seems an appropriate epitaph for our application of air power in Vietnam.

While the book is interesting to read as history—although not easy to read—its usefulness to professional military men is quite limited, except in its recognition of the need for a truly unified goal-

oriented effort by all of the services. We expect to learn from the errors of previous wars, but we certainly did not apply the strategic lessons of World War II to the Korean War. And the failure of air interdiction by tactical air power in Korea—where only one out of every 14 southbound North Korean trucks was destroyed—was evidently forgotten in our futile effort to block the Ho Chi Minh trail strictly by air.

Mrozek's closing comment probably says it all: "The enduring pertinence of the Vietnam conflict rests not in what it prescribes about Asia, nor in what it prescribes about combat techniques and preparedness, but in what it says about ourselves."

**POSTWAR INDOCHINA: OLD ENEMIES AND NEW ALLIES.** Edited by Joseph J. Zasloff (Foreign Service Institute, U.S. Department of State, 1988. 290 Pages. \$9.00, Softbound). Reviewed by Doctor Joe P. Dunn, Converse College.

The 11 chapters in this publication are divided into two parts—Vietnam and Indochina, and External Relations of Indochina States. They are the product of a 1986 State Department conference. The essays are by leading experts in the field, but they are all rather basic and most are frankly disappointing.

None of the following themes, which the editor draws from the chapters, will surprise anyone:

- Vietnam today is the indisputable hegemonic power in Indochina.
- Vietnam is not likely to employ an Indochinese Federation to maintain its continued dominance.
- While there has been little objection to Vietnam's control of Laos, there is stiff resistance against its occupation of Cambodia.
- China is Vietnam's primary adversary in Cambodia, and the Soviet Union is Vietnam's principal ally and supplier of military and economic assistance.
- The U.S. has adopted a low profile policy in Indochina, thereby allowing ASEAN to take the lead.

While scholars will find relatively little of interest in the volume, novices will find it a good introduction to contemporary Indochina.

**RECENT AND RECOMMENDED**  
**THE OTHER ITALY: ITALIAN RESISTANCE IN WORLD WAR II.** By Maria de Blasio Wilhelm. W.W. Norton, 1988. 197 Pages. \$18.95.

**THE DEADLY EMBRACE: HITLER, STALIN, AND THE NAZI-SOVIET PACT, 1939-1941.** By Anthony Read and David Fisher. W.W. Norton, 1988. 675 Pages. \$25.00.

**JACK NORTHROP AND THE FLYING WING: THE REAL STORY BEHIND THE STEALTH BOMBER.** By Ted Coleman, with Robert Wenkam. Paragon House, 1988. 284 Pages. \$24.95.

**AMERICA 1941: A NATION AT THE CROSSROADS.** By Ross Gregory. Free Press, 1989. 339 Pages. \$22.95.

**DESIGNED TO KILL: THE HISTORY OF BRITISH BOMB DISPOSAL.** By Arthur Hogben. Sterling, 1987. 272 Pages. \$24.95.

**617 SQUADRON: THE DAMBUSTERS AT WAR.** By Tom Bennett. First published in 1986. Sterling, 1987. 272 Pages. \$12.95, Softbound.

**THE TYPHOON AND TEMPEST STORY.** By Chris Thomas and Christopher Shores. Sterling, 1988. 224 Pages. \$49.95.

**THE AEGEAN MISSION: ALLIED OPERATIONS IN THE DODECANESE, 1943.** By Jeffrey Holland. Greenwood Press, 1988. 190 Pages. \$37.95.

**HITLER'S PANZERS: THE YEARS OF AGGRESSION.** By Bryan Perrett. Tanks Illustrated Number 27. Sterling, 1987. 64 Pages. \$9.95, Softbound.

**ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE THIRD REICH.** By Louis L. Snyder. A reprint of the 1976 edition. Paragon House, 1988. 410 Pages. 16.95, Softbound.

**IN GOOD COMPANY: ONE MAN'S WAR IN VIETNAM.** By Gary McKay. Allen and Unwin, 1987. 197 Pages. \$34.95.

**THE RENAULT FT LIGHT TANK.** By Steven J. Zaloga. Color Plates by Peter Sarson. Vanguard Series 46. Osprey, 1988. 48 Pages. Softbound.

**THE CRUSADES.** By David Nicolle. Color plates by Richard Hook. Elite Series 19. Osprey, 1988. 64 Pages. Softbound.

**F-4 PHANTOM, VOLUME II.** By Robert C. Stern. Warbirds Illustrated 46. Sterling, 1987. 72 Pages. \$9.95, Softbound.

**BRITISH CRUISERS IN WORLD WAR ONE.** By R.A. Burt. Warships Illustrated 12. Sterling, 1987. 64 Pages. \$9.95, Softbound.

**THE COMMANDOS: WORLD WAR TWO TO THE PRESENT.** By Derek Oakley. Uniforms Illustrated Number 20. Sterling, 1987. 72 Pages. \$9.95, Softbound.

**ARMY GUNSHIPS IN VIETNAM.** By Bob Chenoweth. Warbirds Illustrated Number 47. Sterling, 1987. 72 Pages. \$9.95, Softbound.

**ARGENTINE AIR FORCES IN THE FALKLANDS CONFLICT.** By Salvador Mafe Huertes and Jesus Romero Briasco. Warbirds Illustrated Number 45. Sterling, 1987. 72 Pages. \$9.95, Softbound.

**U.S. MECHANIZED FIREPOWER TODAY.** By Steven Zagola and Arnold Meisner. Tanks Illustrated Number 26. Sterling, 1987. 72 Pages. \$9.95, Softbound.

**F-104 STARFIGHTER.** By Peter R. Foster. Warbirds Illustrated Number 46. Sterling, 1987. 64 Pages. \$12.95.

**THE AIRGUN BOOK.** By John Walter. Fourth Edition. Sterling, 1987. 160 Pages. \$29.95.